



April: Florida Wildfire Awareness Week

Nearly half of Florida is covered in forests, land that is both fire-dependent and fire-prone. As the population of our state continues to increase, most communities are part of the wildland urban interface, meaning they are near forests and wooded areas and are at risk for wildfire.

Florida might be known as the Sunshine State, but it is also the lightning capital of the United States. Underlying dry conditions along with high temperatures and thunderstorms have the potential to spark wildfires. However, lightning is not the only cause of wildfires in the state. Humans are the leading cause of wildfires in Florida.

There are many tools that can help reduce the chances of a catastrophic wildfire, including creating defensible space around your home, safely disposing of yard waste, professionals utilizing prescribed burning, and reporting a potential wildfire or suspicious arson activity. Knowing how to prepare in case of a wildfire is crucial.

For more information on wildfires in the state of Florida, visit www.bewildfirereadyfl.com.

How To Protect Your Home

Hardening your home and outbuildings against fire is important to reduce wildfire impact and its spread.

Consider the following areas as you harden your home:

Interior

- Keep working fire extinguishers on hand.
- Install a smoke alarm on each level of your home, inside and near all bedrooms.
- Test monthly and replace batteries annually.

Roofs

- Regularly clear your roof and gutters of branches, leaves and other types of debris.
- Roofs made of wood shingle or wood shake are especially vulnerable to fire. Consider other, safer materials:
 - Class A asphalt/fiberglass
 - Sheet metal
 - Tile
 - Concrete

Eaves

- (Eaves are the edges of the roof that overhang the face of a wall and, normally, project beyond the side of a building.)





- It is important to make sure that your eaves are made with fire resistant materials and in good condition to ensure that a fire cannot enter your attic.

Vents

- Clean vents regularly.
- Remove debris surrounding these areas.
- Consider installing vent covers to prevent fire from entering through them.

Walls

- Clear exterior walls of foliage and brush.
- Consider fire-resistant building materials from foundation to roof.

Windows and Doors

- Windows and doors must be constructed to withstand high temperatures.
- Regularly inspect windows and doors in your home and make sure they are sealed with no leaks.
- Install dual-pane windows with tempered glass, shutters, insect screens.

Balconies and Decks

- Use fire-resistant and noncombustible materials to repair or add balconies or decks onto your home.
- Eliminate debris and combustible products surrounding these areas.
- Consider fire-resistant and noncombustible furniture in outdoor spaces.